

Maintaining CPS Case Files

This document accompanies IA 33, OCM 39, IIHS 16: Organizing and Closing Case Files

Frequently Asked Questions about Case Files

SIGNED eWiSACWIS FORMS: *There are forms in eWiSACWIS that are filled out in the system, but then printed to be signed. Do I need to scan the entire form in?*

Yes. If the form needs a signature, the entire form needs to be scanned in to show what was signed.

eWiSACWIS forms that are approved by the supervisor in eWiSACWIS and need no one else's signature do not have to be printed. These approvals are tracked by the system, so a signature on a paper document is not necessary. The document does not have to be printed and scanned back in.

DESTROYING ORIGINALS: *Can I destroy the originals once I scan them in? What about signed Court documents?*

Yes, scanned documents are considered legal documentation. You may destroy the original record after it has been scanned into the eWiSACWIS system and then the scanning has been verified, per *MDA1057 Child Protective Services Case Files*.

EMAILS: *What about emails? Do I need to print them and put them in the case file or scan them in?*

Remember in training that you were told; "if it is not documented, it didn't happen?" Emails that are pertinent to the case are considered part of the record and subject to the rules per *MDA1057 Child Protective Services Case Files*. They should be copied and pasted into a case note. Emails such as confirming a meeting time with a foster parent are not essential unless you determine such contacts need to be documented. Treat emails as you would phone calls or case staffings, documenting those that are important to the case in your case notes.

NOTE: *There is an important exception with emails. Emails between you and DCF/BMCW or private agency attorneys are **privileged communication**. If a case goes to discovery, these are NOT to be sent to Court. To prevent these confidential communications from being inadvertently included in discovery files, do NOT put them in case notes. Instead, **print them out on yellow paper** and place them in the Legal section of the paper case file. They can then be easily identified and excluded if the file is sent to court for discovery.*

SERVICE PROVIDER NOTES: *What about notes from service providers?*

Information from Care Manager does not need to be added to the case file. If a case file is requested by the Court for discovery, these files are printed off and added. Progress notes from service providers can be added to the Service Provider section of the paper case file. Services that would be covered under HIPAA confidentiality rules, which include AODA, mental/behavioral or other health care services provided (to either the child or parent (including Wraparound) would be filed in the paper case file under Medical.

CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY FORMS: *What do I do with signed consents and confidentiality forms?*

It is very helpful if the signed *Authorization to Consent to Medical Treatment* DCF-F-2503 is scanned in under the Participant tab as soon as possible. Whether or not you scan in other consents will be determined by whether the consent is for only one incident. Thus, a consent for the foster parent to travel with the child out of state would not need to be scanned but filed under Collateral. A consent such as the *Confidential Information Release Authorization* DCF-F-369-E filled out for education records may be used during the time the child is in care and would be scanned in. This same signed consent is valid for both IA and OCM/IIHS.

Confidentiality forms signed at the beginning of a family team meeting that will not be used again do not need to be scanned in, but can be filed under Collateral in the paper case file.

REOPENED CASES: *If a case has been closed and then reopens, do I put the new information in with that of the old case using the old case file dividers?*

If a case reopens with services in OCM or IIHS, the BMCW office associate will request the file from the BMCW Closed Records Room or retrieved it from the State Records Center and send it to the assigned agency. New case file dividers are provided when the file transfers from IA to OCM or IIHS. You are to file new paperwork in the front of the box or accordion file using the new case file dividers. This then becomes an “episode” within a family case. Once this system is in place for a few years, cases will be organized by episodes following the organization in eWiSACWIS cases.

DATA DISKS: *What do I do with data disks? For example, police photos of uninhabitable houses?*

Data disks should be filed in the paper case file. To prevent them from getting separated from the file, use an adhesive data disk sleeve and attach it to the “Collateral” case file divider. Do not attach them to the accordion file. Photos should never be scanned into eWiSACWIS.

BMCW no longer receives data disks from the Child Protection Center. These are given directly to Court and are available from CPC if needed.

SIZE OF FILES: *I tried to scan in a 30 page police report and eWiSACWIS said the file was too large. How large can pdf file be in eWiSACWIS?*

The system can handle a document up to 10 MB, which is quite large. If the document is full of images, it may be very large, but most of the documents we deal with are far below that size. Please have IT check the resolution of the scan settings on the multifunctional device if you have a problem scanning.

PSG BACKGROUND CHECKS: *Why can't Professional Services Group (PSG) scan the background checks they do into eWiSACWIS for IA instead of sending it in an email?*

It has been determined that because not everyone PSG does a background check on for placement becomes placement resource or is party to the case in some other way, these checks should not become part of the child welfare system database. Background checks on those party to the case (parents / maltreaters) can be scanned and put into the Participant tab. Background checks on those who become providers would be scanned into the Provider tab by licensing staff.

QUESTIONS: *Who can I contact if I have a question about whether or not something can be scanned into eWiSACWIS and where it goes?*

BMCW Program Evaluation Manager Phil Zellmer will help you phillip.zellmer@wisconsin.gov

As a general rule, you *cannot* scan in records that are not public and that we did not create. This includes health care (mental, behavioral, health, dental, vision, AODA), school records, and collateral reports. Because police are public, they can be scanned in.

There is no longer a case file divider for the child. Where do we put child specific information?

The child information does not need to be separated from the family until a TPR. At that time, you follow the guidelines for the preparation of adoption files. You would put information about the child's medical history under medical; school records under collateral. You may want to paperclip together information in the Collateral divider that pertains to a child for ease of location.

Should I put notebooks I use during interviews, etc. into the paper case file?

Notes about a case that are for your personal recollection and use are not subject to open records requests and should not go into the case file. Anything that is important to the case should be transcribed into an eWiSACWIS case note.